

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301



February 9, 2026

**From:** Community Renewable Energy Association - CREA

**Subject:** Testimony in support of SB 1582

Good afternoon Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith and members of the committee:

As the Executive Director of CREA - The Community Renewable Energy Association (CREA), I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1582, with the -2 amendment.

CREA is an ORS 190 intergovernmental association, with both Oregon local government elected leaders and renewable energy developers on its board of directors. Members include counties, irrigation districts, councils of government, renewable energy project developers, for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations. CREA supports business and local economic opportunities through renewable energy development in a competitive environment.

Senate Bill 1582, with the -2 amendment, requires electric companies, as defined under ORS 757.600<sup>1</sup>, to develop and file a distributed power plant program with the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

With Oregon's growing energy needs and given strains on the distribution system, like lack of transmission capacity, load pockets and delays of interconnection to new generation resources, CREA encourages the state to be creative about utilizing any and all clean energy resources that are available to build resilience into our grid. Other states have already paved the way, showing us the opportunities that exist with VPPs (Virtual Power Plants), to capture and collect energy already existing in the region and utilizing it in times of need.

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<sup>1</sup> "Electric company" means an entity engaged in the business of distributing electricity to retail electricity consumers in this state, but does not include a consumer-owned utility. ([ORS 757.600 \(11\)](#))

Rural communities have already seen how Oregon's grid can leave them in the cold. Living in Eastern Oregon, I know personally how power has grown increasingly unreliable, and how it has become necessary for several communities and residents to have backup generators. Losing power for long periods can have dramatic impacts on affected communities and lead to lots of unanticipated issues.

CREA's members are increasingly focusing on growing energy resiliency in our communities, which are primarily in the rural regions. This is why we continue to push for the adoption of more micro-grids and for developing energy projects in the state boundaries, to ensure power supply is local. While microgrids are created to keep the lights on during an outage, the microgrid can act like a virtual power plant when it is not being used in an emergency. The upfront and performance incentives in the virtual power plant program can help public agencies finance microgrids. Microgrids and virtual power plants are two sides of the energy resilience coin. We also appreciate the economic development benefits of projects being created locally, like jobs and taxes; however, that is a larger conversation for another day.

We believe SB 1582 -1 is another helpful tool for the tool chest. Providing another way to provide power to residents to help address peak loads. Given current transmission restrictions, collecting and utilizing existing power locally feel like a smart move for Oregon and its residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'J' at the beginning.

James Williams  
CREA Executive Director